

Florida

Fishing • Hunting
• Conservation •
Outdoor Recreation

Clown of the Waterways
Grins and Groans

WILDLIFE

OCTOBER 1970

The Florida Magazine for all Sportsmen

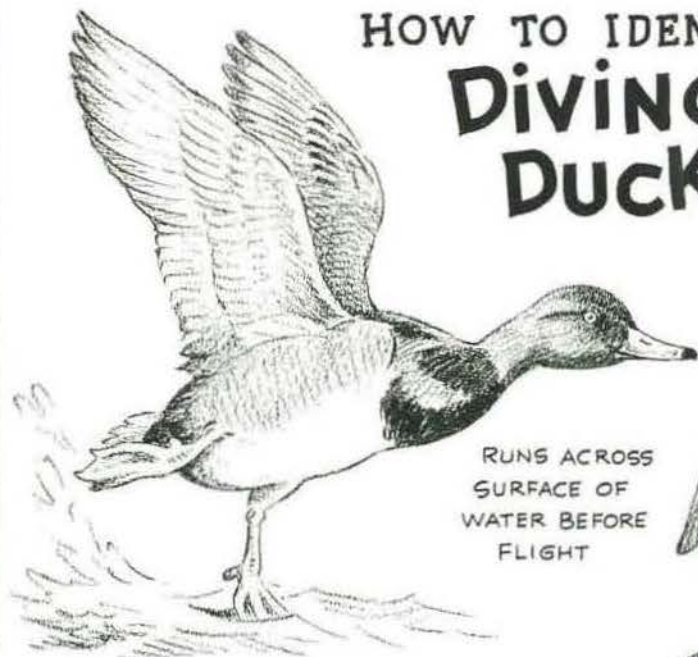
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Wallace
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Florida Wildlife Scrapbook

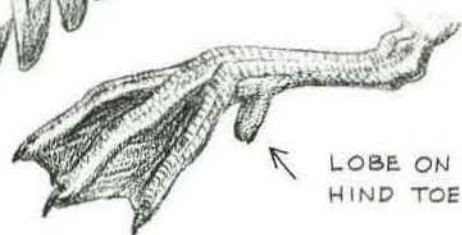
HOW TO IDENTIFY DIVING DUCKS



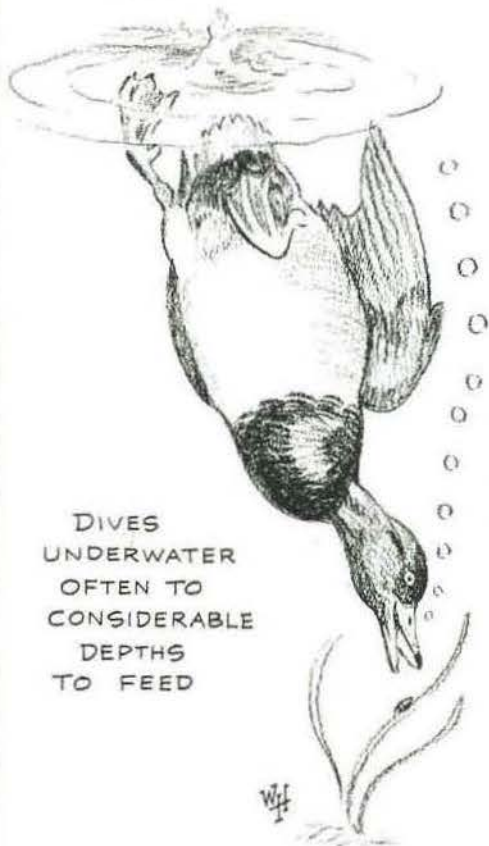
RUNS ACROSS
SURFACE OF
WATER BEFORE
FLIGHT



WING PATCH OR
"SPECULUM" NOT
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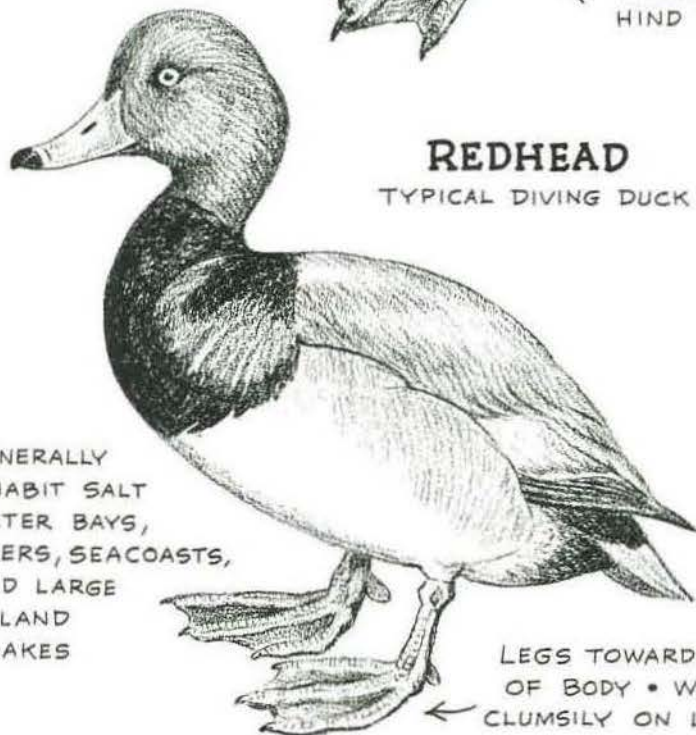


LOBE ON
HIND TOE



DIVES
UNDERWATER
OFTEN TO
CONSIDERABLE
DEPTHS
TO FEED

GENERALLY
INHABIT SALT
WATER BAYS,
RIVERS, SEACOASTS,
AND LARGE
INLAND
LAKES



REDHEAD
TYPICAL DIVING DUCK

LEGS TOWARD REAR
OF BODY • WALKS
CLUMSILY ON LAND

DIVING DUCKS FOUND IN FLORIDA - REDHEAD,
RING-NECKED DUCK, GREATER SCAUP DUCK, LESSER
SCAUP DUCK, CANVASBACK, AMERICAN GOLDENEYE,
BUFFLEHEAD, SURF SCOTER, RUDDY DUCK, HOODED
MERGANSER, AMERICAN MERGANSER and RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

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In This Issue

Clown of the Waterways	Art Hutt	4
The Canvasback	Gene Smith	12
Grins and Groans	Edmund McLaurin	14
Exotic Waterfowl Project	George Cornwell	18
Florida's "Garden of Eden"	Virginia Newman	22

Departments

Hunting Season Notes	7
Fishing	9
Hunting	27
Fish Management Notes	30

The Cover

Known as a fast flying "heavyweight," the Canvasback can be easily recognized with its wedge-shaped head and whitish body. The female, above, has a more brownish head than the "redheaded" drakes. See page 12.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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coots—commonly called mudhens—are at once clannish, and entirely at ease with ducks

Clown of the Waterways

THERE'S NO MISTAKING a coot. Color, voice, shape, and unusual mannerisms all combine to set this chuckling busybody apart from the rest of the feathered clans which traffic on top of, under, or at the edge of the water.

My boyhood recollections of this bird are pleasant. I remember it as a joyful comedian. Wherever my dad and I fished there were coots involved—whether in rafts so thick on Lake Apopka that we could actually smell them or in solitary birds foraging among the bulrushes.

Almost every time we committed a fishing boo-boo resulting in a bass getting away, from somewhere nearby a mocking cackle would resound across the water announcing our incompetence to the rest of the animal world, or so it seemed to us. This clear, evenly spaced cry, innocent to other ears, first caused chagrin, but finally we accepted the coot for what it was—a harmless comedian.

The American Coot (*Fulica americana*), or mudhen, as it is equally well known, is a migratory game bird. It belongs to the rail family but steps over into the world of waterfowl to do most of its living, forming a close association with the true ducks for its entire life cycle. It breeds, feeds, travels, and lives in the same areas as the many species of ducks that use fresh water. In fact, in both

breeding and feeding it sometimes comes off better than ducks because it is such an aggressive, competitive breeder, an efficient, indiscriminating eater, and because it makes no great demands regarding winter conditions.

Coots breed most actively in the pothole country of the Prairie States and Canada, with the Gulf States hosting most of the overwintering birds. (A large resident population of coots is obvious in these states, too.) Coot migrations take place at night, and although all the major waterfowl flyways serve the mudhen, along the Mississippi Flyway the flights are the heaviest—and the sport harvest of coots sometimes exceeds that of ducks.

While I have no official estimate of Florida's resident coot population, their numbers appear quite substantial, for very few waterways are without them. I'd guess, though, that it is a process of winning a few and losing a few—winning mudhens through the increased aquatic growth which they thrive upon in our rapidly dying lakes, and losing some through loss of desirable habitat in the wake of drainage and development, the two environmental evils offsetting each other in this particular case.

Identification of this gawky, small-headed waterbird is simple. There aren't too many others with which the plain Jane mudhen can be confused. Its

plump body is slate gray, darkening toward the neck and head. The bill is conspicuously white and there is a touch of white under the tail and also on the trailing edges of the wings—best seen in flight. The coot's legs are greenish-black.

Unlike the webbed feet of ducks and geese, the mudhen's toes are equipped with leathery, lobed surfaces which enable it to pad about the marsh without sinking up to its tail coverts. When a coot is airborne, the lobed feet are extended to the rear and serve as a rudder in place of the short, useless tail.

The other birds with which the mudhen could be confused are the Florida and purple gallinules. While both have other distinguishing characteristics, the most apparent are the reddish bills, which contrast strongly with the white bill of the mudhen.

Watching a coot take flight is an unforgettable, and sometimes involved, experience; involved because you find yourself mentally "helping" the poor creature into the air. Unable to launch its dumpy little self directly, the coot combines rapid wing strokes with a frantic downfield running play, noisily spattering and sputtering across the water on its lobed feet until laboring liftoff occurs—many yards

from the starting point. On a quiet day particularly the sound of the pattering feet is quite audible.

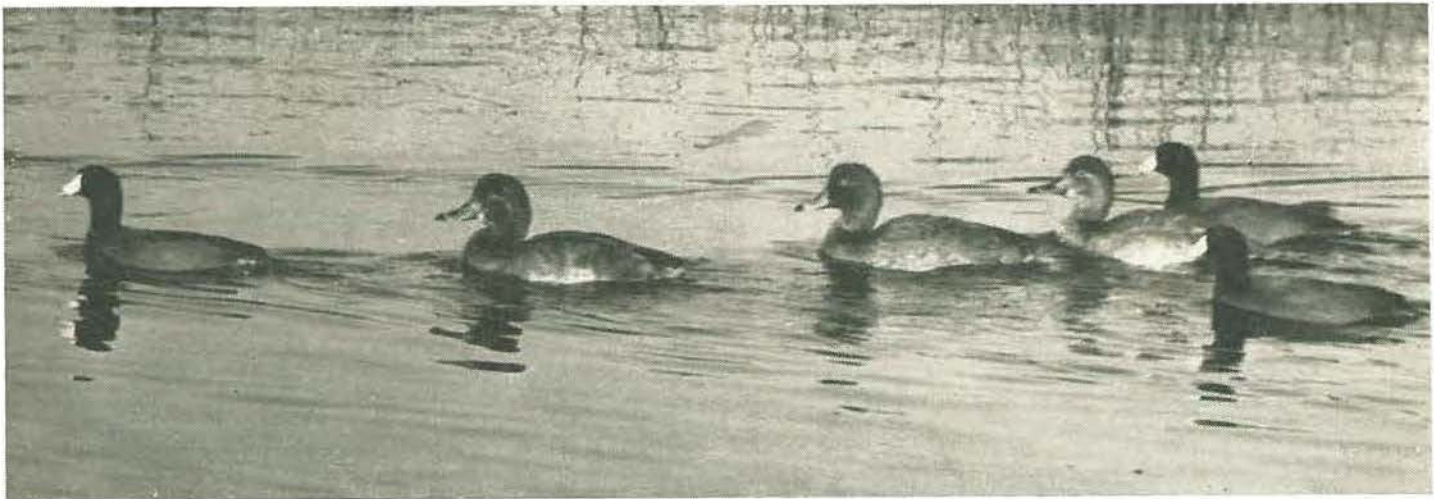
Once in the air, and once the landing gear are retracted, the funny little flyer is capable of modest speed.

Unlike ducks, which usually "spook" to parts unknown when they take wing, the coot travels a few hundred yards or around the first corner then settles down again to resume its nonchalant feeding routine.

The coot is also a cornball swimmer, jerking its head forward with each stroke of its feet—much like a child's mechanical pull-toy duck. One astute observer says it looks to him as though the bird is walking on solid bottom even when it is in deep water. Despite the awkward motion and wasted effort, the coot always seems to get where it wants to go.

Chuckles, wails, coos, squawks, and whistles are part of the coot's vocal repertoire, but the most consistent call note is a "kruk, kruk, kruk," repeated sometimes in longer series.

Having observed the bird for many years, I
(Continued on next page)



Photos By Wallace Hughes

Shown in company with redheads, above, and pair of baldpates, right, coots are always social; rarely found alone. The black head and white bill make them appear monklike.

By ART HUTT



(Continued from preceding page)

strongly suspect the appellation "silly coot" stems from its amused expression, simple appearance, and its clumsy mannerisms.

"Mudhen" suggests—and rightfully so—the coot's chickenlike qualities. The bobbing motion of the head, its activities on land as a seedeater, and the simple barnyard quality of its raspy voice all relate to the chicken group. In addition, it has an unusually large, chickenlike gizzard.

Nesting takes place in the spring. Six to 12 tan, black-speckled eggs are laid in a rough nest. Incubation, which takes 21 or 22 days, begins when the first egg is laid, so as the young hatch, papa mudhen squires them about while mama sits around to finish the job. The young are quick to learn how to dive, swim, and forage.

Coots eat grass, pondweeds, and algae, but won't pass up tadpoles, insects, snails, fishes, worms, and an occasional mouse or small snake. A coot will even waddle well up on land, nipping at roots, bulbs, buds, blossoms, and seeds of any plants available.

I remember a misty morning last spring when my neighbor called in excitement to ask if those were guinea hens on her lakefront lawn. A glance confirmed a flock of 32 mudhens happily browsing in her yard. Eventually they found the corn under my birdfeeder and for about a month they made a daily pilgrimage into our yards.

Mudhens are efficient divers. They bound into the air slightly, then head straight down. I've seen

them work spots in our lake that I know are 20 feet deep. They commonly bob to the surface with beards of weeds hanging from their beaks.

Too easy a target to be highly regarded as sport—except by bored duck hunters—coots are poorly regarded as game—or food—except in localized areas. In Florida, they don't appear to be eaten to any great extent, although I'm told there are recipes that render them quite palatable. Some hunters bag them only to make a meal of the large gizzards.

In the Cajun Country of Louisiana, residents will gladly trade ducks for coots and figure they are getting the better of the bargain.

My coot-eating experience has been limited—in fact, even singular. Many years ago on a high school boat-camping trip to Silver Springs from Eustis, a chum bagged a galloping coot. Our only cooking utensil was a small coffee pot—already possessed of its own peculiar flavor. After stuffing the cut-up bird into the pot, we boiled and boiled and boiled it. I don't think the coot ever changed—except for the worse. Finally, we threw it out and went back to our simple, but dependable, fare of beans and peanut butter.

Most duck hunters tolerate coots, since, frequently a blend of live coots and "dead" decoys brings in the real thing. At other times, they anger hunters when they take over areas that could be used by more desirable species of waterfowl. But attempts to scare the coots away usually end in failure. These goofy birds cannot be intimidated. They really are the clowns of America's waterways. And what marsh or lake would be the same without them? ●

A noisy rustle of wings and a lot of splashing means flock of coots taking wing. Unable to launch themselves directly into the air they combine rapid wing strokes with frantic running motion across the water until liftoff is achieved.

Photo By Wallace Hughes



Hunting Season Notes

AN IMPORTANT POINT of law, and one that could save Florida hunters a lot of expense and embarrassment if remembered, is that not all free-ranging, so-called "wild" hogs are legal game.

By action of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the respective county commissions, hogs have been declared legal game—and subject to hunting regulations—only in Alachua County, Palm Beach County, portions of Levy County, and on the following 20 wildlife management areas (in alphabetical order): Aucilla, Avon Park, Camp Blanding, Brent, Bull Creek, Corbett, Croom, Eglin, Farmton, Fisheating Creek, Guano, Gulf Hammock, Lochloosa, Nassau, Parker, Point Washington, Richloam, St. Vincent, Tide Swamp and the Webb area. (See the current Hunting and Fishing Regulations Summary for dates and specific hunt regulations for each management area and a key map showing locations of these and other public hunt areas in Florida.)

Unless a hunter has personally checked into the matter and knows hogs are legal game where he is hunting, it is best to forget about shooting hogs. The alternative is to face possible prosecution for the destruction of somebody's livestock—a very serious offense in this state, where cattle and hog rustling is a major illicit business.

There is a minimum size limit on wild hogs this year—unless the rule is specifically lifted for a particular wildlife management area. The new rule says, in effect, that no hog may be taken or possessed that stands less than 15 inches tall at the shoulder. Similarly, unless otherwise provided by area regulations, the daily bag limit on wild hogs is one; the season limit, two.

FIFTEEN HUNDRED primitive weapons enthusiasts—bowhunters and muzzleloading firearms buffs—snapped up all available St. Vincent Wildlife Management Area hunt permits shortly after the 1970 regulations were announced in September.

Three 4-day hunts were set as follows: Bow and arrow only—October 24-27 and November 21-24; bow and arrow and certain muzzleloading rifles—December 12-15.

Each hunt is limited to not more than 500 persons. Hunt permits were issued at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis from the office of the refuge manager, St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge, Apalachicola.

The primitive firearms permitted in the December hunt must be percussion cap or flintlock muzzleloading rifles having a single rifled barrel of at least .40 caliber but not larger than .58 caliber.

Legal game during all three hunts will be white-



Photo By Jim Brontly

Feral hogs are not legal game wherever found. Only in certain places have they been declared legal game and open to licensed hunters. No need to chance prosecution for hog stealing. Know the law where you are hunting—or pass up hogs for native game.

tailed deer of either sex, wild hogs of any size, raccoons, and opossums. Bag limits on deer will be the usual two per day and three per season, but there will be no limits on hogs, 'coons or 'possums.

Each hunt participant must meet state licensing requirements, and for these special hunts, those under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult.

Camping will be permitted at two designated sites on the 12,358-acre island refuge in Franklin County. The entire island will be open to hunting. Those planning to camp should note that all travel to the island is over coastal water and that boats or arrangements for boat transportation are the responsibility of the individual, that no drinking water is provided at the primitive campsites, and that no motorized vehicles of any type will be permitted on the island.

Permit holders are urged to read the detailed hunt regulations carefully and abide by the rules, many of which are intended to reduce the chances of having hunting accidents.

Hunters should take particular note that the Asian sambar deer which live on the island *must not be taken*. These large, dark colored deer—actually members of the elk family—have lived and reproduced successfully on St. Vincent Island since first introduced in 1908.

IT WILL BE TO THE duck hunter's advantage to really "know his ducks" for the 1970-71 waterfowl season in Florida, for under an experimental point
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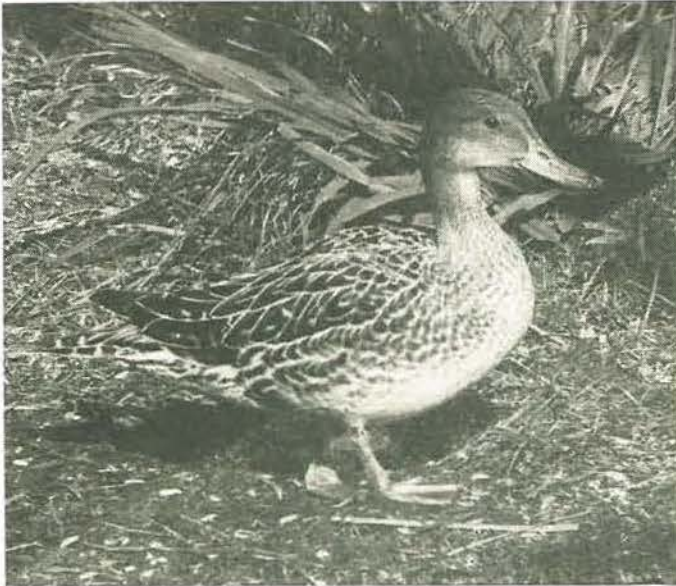


Photo By Wallace Hughes

Duck pictured is similar to other species, but there are differences. Illustrated folder "Know Your Ducks," available from Commission offices, aid hunters in proper identification. This one is female pintail—worth 20 points.

(Continued from preceding page)

system adopted by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, proper duck identification, particularly after a duck is in hand, will be the factor determining the daily bag limit.

The point system, tried in other states last year under a far less liberal bag limit than Florida's, places a point value on different species and sexes of waterfowl—ducks and mergansers—and allows hunters a maximum of 100 points.

Point values are assigned as follows:

Hen mallard, black duck, Florida duck, wood duck, redhead, canvasback, and hooded merganser—count 90 points each.

Drake mallard, hen pintail, green-winged teal, and ring-necked duck—count 20 points each.

Scaup (bluebill), widgeon (baldpate), drake pintail, blue-winged teal, gadwall, ruddy duck, shoveler, bufflehead, goldeneye, American merganser, red-breasted merganser, and all other ducks not assigned a specific point value—count 10 points each.

The daily bag limit is reached when the point value of the last bird taken, when added to the sum of the point values of the other ducks and mergansers already taken during that day, reaches or exceeds 100 points.

Dr. O. E. Frye, Jr., commission director, explained the system by saying, "A hunter might, for example, harvest 10 ducks worth 10 points each, or four ducks worth 20 points each plus two 10-pointers—or any similar combination—but he must stop hunting when the last duck or merganser bagged puts his total up to or over 100 points."

"Exceeding the point total by part of a duck will not be considered a violation," he continued. "For

instance, should a hunter bag four 20-point birds and next shoot a 90-pointer, he will have exceeded the total by 70 points but would not be in violation of the law unless he shot another bird."

Similarly, he noted that a hunter who first shot a 90-point duck would still be entitled to one more bird of any point value before he would be through hunting for that day.

The point system is a form of species management, designed to reduce the harvest of ducks that may have encountered low reproduction while at the same time allowing sportsmen a more liberal harvest of those species in good supply in the flyway.

Frye said, "A hunter will be able to tabulate his points only if he can identify the ducks in his bag. We recognize the difficulty in identifying ducks in flight, but feel that waterfowl hunters should be able to recognize the bird in hand and know its point value."

A special waterfowl identification pamphlet has been prepared by the Commission to aid duck hunters in learning both the birds and their assigned point values.

DEER HUNTING activity will be restricted this season in the Citrus Wildlife Management Area in Citrus County, according to James A. Powell, chief of the Game Management Division, who reported a reduction of the deer herd this year.

Bowhunters were limited to a buck-only archery season in the Citrus area—from September 12 through October 2.

Gun hunters may hunt by special permit, as usual, but only on the weekend of November 14-15. The number of hunters will be limited to 1200, as previously announced.

The action to reduce hunting pressure in the Citrus area was taken by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission in its August business meeting, held at Tallahassee, after annual deer censusing showed a reduction from an estimated population of 1800 deer a year ago to a current estimate of 900.

Powell indicated there was no evidence of a natural dieoff and noted that the Citrus area has received extensive patrol by wildlife officers during the year, which reduced the chances of heavy poaching activity there. He further pointed out that the harvest of an estimated 300 deer from the area during the last hunting season was in line with recommended harvest rates intended to decrease the chances of overpopulation on the area.

"We feel the herd was reduced to a healthy level as the result of legal hunting activity and find no evidence of a dieoff. However, we will not rule out the possibility until completion of a thorough pre-season investigation of the Citrus deer situation," said Powell. ●

Tackle Talk

FISHING

knots, nets and bass—they all come in different forms and sizes, and all handled differently according to local gamefish and fishing styles

By CHARLES WATERMAN



SMALLMOUTH BASS fishing in streams is one of the sports fading from the scene these days. The "in-between" waters of the smallmouth rivers are especially susceptible to pollution and fishing pressures. They're classified as "warm" waters as opposed to the cold waters of fresh water trout.

When compared to the southern largemouth waters, smallmouth rivers are pretty cool but still "warm" by biological standards. Both large and smallmouth bass are found in the same waters in many areas, the smallmouths found almost as far south as Florida (it's now pretty well decided they don't live here), and the largemouths being found as far north as Maine—where they play second fiddle to the smallmouth.

But, neither is in the front row for Maine anglers, who tend to consider all bass as tourist fish at best and as trash fish at worst. Few Maine residents will fish for them in the same way that a few Florida residents fish for tarpon or jack crevalle. There's a difference, of course, because the bass are very good to eat.

I fished in Maine last June, which is one of the top months for bass, generally spawning time. I stayed at two different camps on the Belgrade chain of lakes—Bear Spring Camp on Great Lake and Alden

Camp on East Lake. The typical Maine fishing camps are a cluster of rustic cottages near a big farmhouse type of headquarters, where you overeat excellent food, American style. Both of the camps I visited were built in 1910, a few years before I began reading about Maine fishing. You can get by with a small motor on most of the waters, using a canoe if you like. Most of the cottages have a little dock where your rented boat stays.

In the early part of June, fishing is restricted to single-hooked artificials. Later you can fish with bait or treble hooks. Last June I caught a lot of smallmouths in surroundings that reminded me of the Ozarks of my youth. Maine has stream fishing as well as lake fishing but the surroundings are quite similar, the fish coming up from chunk rock and big boulders, through clear water.

The fish came best to small popping bugs and streamers that could be fished with fairly light tackle. A two-pounder was a big one, but you could get plenty of smaller fish and the whole thing is completely fascinating for anyone who is not obsessed with big fish fever. There were some large-mouth black bass, too.

And the fellow who fished with me, Paul Fournier, a public information consultant for the Maine Department of Economic Development, a former camp operator and guide and an expert canoeist—admitted he hadn't been bass fishing for years. Like most Maine residents he's a trout and salmon man and he canoed me to some nice brook trout, after I'd had several days of bass. Trout fishing was fine but I can't say it was better than the bass. Got a letter from Paul later and he said he'd been bass fishing since I left. It took a missionary from Florida to reconvert him, I guess.

AND LET ME SLIP back to Maine for something else. Since I've spent a lot of hours in canoes from time to time but come a long way from being a canoeist, I asked some questions up in New England where canoes are a big part of the outdoor scene. If you took a quick look at the streets of northern
(Continued on next page)



Author lands a nice smallmouth on one of the Belgrade lakes in Maine—the natives generally take dim view of bass as gamefish.

(Continued from preceding page)

Maine you might guess that all of the cars were delivered new with canoes fastened on top.

The aluminum canoe is in first place for fishing and most other rough treatment in the bush. It isn't eaten by porcupines, it doesn't rot, and it's light. It is criticized by experienced men because it tends to cling to rocks it contacts under water rather than sliding off.

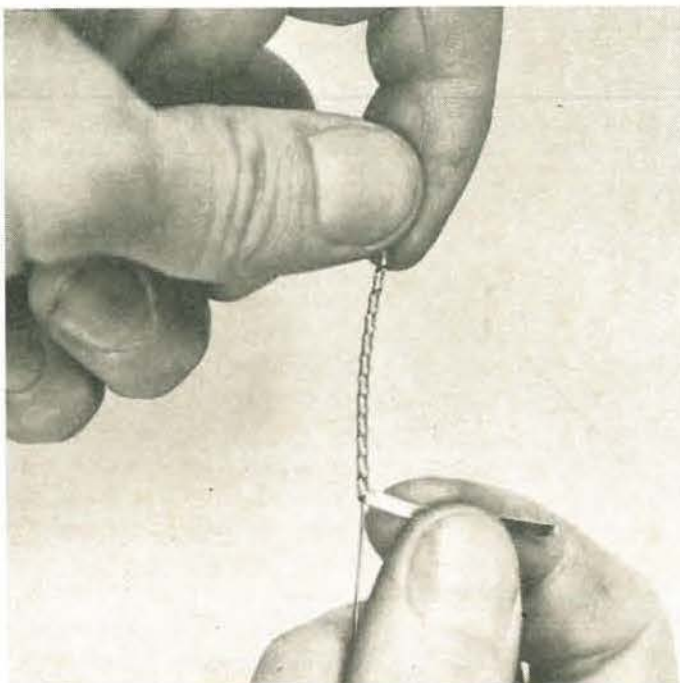
The racing canoe men are now going for cedar canoes covered with fiber glass, mainly because the wooden canoe has thus far been shaped for more efficient use. Some say aluminum simply can't be formed that way with currently known processes. Anyway, there are a few builders laying up canoes by hand and selling all they can produce. The canoe is a fisherman's boat with lots of length for weight.

MANY YEARS AGO I got a line dryer from L.L. Bean. It was simply a big wooden spool that held a lot of lines, and turned in a crude but efficient cradle. Mine has been a big help, but I see it isn't listed in current catalogs. Modern materials make line drying less important and the obvious storage uses apparently weren't sufficient to keep up the demand.

The Orvis Company, Inc., Manchester, Vermont 05254 sells a line changer for \$5.75 that will enable you to roll a fly line up on a little windlass, which then collapses and lets you store the line in loose loops.

Maybe it's coincidence but I happen to have seen a lot of useful things in the Orvis catalog lately. At risk of being accused of being in their employ I'll go for one more item:

I have an oversized skull and when I buy one of those little porkpie hats, which some really hip anglers wear, I look like a burlesque comedian.



Orvis has a thing they call a "Year-rounder helmet" that is somewhat like those little hats but has a rounded crown and a somewhat wider brim. I put one on and nobody laughed at all, hardly. It's made of poplin and should last a long time.

A WHILE BACK we ran an article about fishing for rough fish and unusual fish in which I related some experiences of Eugene W. Miller of Dayton, Ohio. He'd caught some big mudfish at Dunnellon. After reading the article, Miller made a comment in justification of his sport.

Other fishermen, he says, often make fun of him and ask him why he fools with rough fish when more exotic sport is available. His answer is a question as to how *they've* been doing. Often they say they haven't had a bite and he leaves it like that. Makes you think, doesn't it?

A "RAPAROUND" fishing line sinker, offered by Worth Fishing Tackle, Stevens Point, Wis., 54481, seems to solve a problem of those who want to add just a little weight to a small lure or bait. It's simply a strip of soft lead that can be wrapped around any kind of line without damage and weighs about $\frac{1}{32}$ ounce, and comes in a watertight plastic tube. The lead wrapping business isn't new, and I've used it for a long time with considerable convenience. Strip lead is often used for weighting fly bodies. It's handier than lead wire unless you want to build up a pretty heavy weight.

I HAD A LETTER from Dane Terrill, Route 1, Box 168, Bitely, Mich. 49300. Terrill mentions the use of the little twisters that come on bread and freezer packages, etc. He twists them around the ends of lines to keep the line tips from going clear into the reel when there's no lure attached.

Another nice gadget for similar uses are ordinary pipe cleaners although somewhat more bulky than the twisters. Both types of dingus can be used for securing fly lines in rolls, when you don't have a reel spool left over for an extra line.

ONE OF THE BIG mysteries about striking fish is the fact they'll swat a lure hard on one day and take it like a pickpocket the next. This business isn't completely regulated by time either for there are certain waters noted for hard strikes and others for sneaky nibbles.

The loudest, hardest bass strikes I've ever experienced came on surface lures down on the lower

Soft lead strips wrapped on line make a nearly invisible sinker.



Aluminum nets are strong and light, but inclined to give trouble where the hoop connects to the handle.

Gulf Coast last June. The fish weren't especially large, almost all of them being less than two pounds, but they blasted like tarpon. The year before, on a canal just a few miles away, I'd had bigger fish that could take a lure under with scarcely a ripple, performing like undersized panfish until you tightened up. All of the fish were fat, sassy and in good shape.

The common theories about this are that competition from other fish will cause hard strikes, and a suspicious customer is more likely to take it gently. Nobody has proved either one and nobody's likely to prove it any time soon, either.

ALUMINUM LANDING nets haven't been kind to me. Most of those I've had simply crumpled where the handle meets the hoop after a little use, especially if there was a little grass in with my bass as I scooped. I recently got one that seemed strong enough for anything, but when the mesh part gave out and I tried to unfasten the screws that hold the hoop to the handle I found they were completely rusted and corroded. Have to drill them out and put in bigger ones, I guess. I complained to a dealer.

"They're all like that," he said with little sympathy.

I have four busted ones hanging in the back room.

I'VE HEARD A LOT about schooling bass during the past summer, something that I predicted pretty confidently. Any time you have a lot of rain and

plenty of moving water you'll have bait that grows healthy and runs in surface schools. That's when school bass, bar bass, or whatever you want to call them, are going to be active. The schooling black bass is fading from the scene, but he still shows up from time to time.

A FISHERMAN showed me a 27-inch thing the other day and asked what it was. Like many other casual viewers, I simply called it a "water dog," which it wasn't. It's the thing with a frog-like face, an eel-like body and two legs in front that you'll sometimes see coming to the surface for a quick gulp of air. The correct name is the greater siren and it lives mostly on aquatic insects and crustaceans, my tolerant biologist friends tell me.

THERE'S A BOOM in a special kind of outboard fishing boat—the big, fast open-water job, laid out for pure fishing. They run from 15 to about 22 feet long and most of them are equipped with a center console for steering. I don't know just how many have reached the market but Florida has quite a number of them, most of them made from fiber glass. I have seen none that were specifically designed for use with oars but several that could be adapted to rowing.

I guess the first one of these jobs was the Boston Whaler, which seemed to have that end of the market pretty well to itself for a while. The center console for steering and all controls has caught on strongly. One of the nicest of the newer models I've seen is a Hewes from Miami—a "Vee" rather than a tri-hull.

And in a final blow to the dying oarlock there's a whole rash of "bass boats" made to be driven from the bow, often with a stick instead of a wheel, and easily adapted for operation with a foot-steering electric motor.

Foot-steering takes a little practice, mostly because the beginner tends to over-control. I did that on my first effort and found that my wife Debie had the same trouble when she tried it, going down a canal like one of those little bumping cars they have in the amusement parks.

The electric motors have been improved rapidly. They're here to stay.

SUN AND WIND are hard on my lips and I have frequent cold sores when fishing. The other day I groped in the medicine cabinet without my glasses, latched on to a little plastic bottle and doped a brand new cold sore thoroughly. It dried up very quickly and I reported to my wife that she'd finally found an ointment that did the job. She demanded to see the bottle.

"That," said she, "is for athlete's foot."

From now on it's for cold sores, too. ●



The Canvasback

strong and fast—and heavy—it is a waterfowler's favorite

GIVEN JUST ten words and five seconds to describe the canvasback, I'd say it's a big, white-bodied, red-headed diving duck that's hard to find. "Cans" are still in short supply—though things are looking up a bit—and there's some irony in the fact of their scarcity.

Wouldn't you just know the heaviest, tastiest, and most popular game duck of them all would have the most exacting nesting requirements, and, therefore, the greatest odds *against* year-after-year hatching success? That's the canvasback! And that's life, I guess.

Canvasbacks are among the first and most severely hit when adverse water conditions prevail on the waterfowl nesting grounds. That's because they require a foot or so of water over which to build their nests. When periods of low water come and the potholes and ponds dry up, whether from drought, drainage, or both, the duckling crop suffers. It's an ancient—and a simple—relationship.

Weighing in at an average 3 pounds per bird, the can is larger than either the mallard or pintail, two other popular "big ducks." So, a brace of canvasbacks in the bottom of the boat should represent a fine morning of duck hunting for the fellow who can manage to put them there this season.

Cans are early nesters—and late migrants from the breeding grounds. They sometimes hang back too long. Early winter storms catch many on the ice of frozen nesting ponds, lakes, and potholes, and they perish. But most of them move into migration

lanes, sweeping east-southeastward almost clear across the continent from the Dakotas, Minnesota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, through the Great Lakes region, to enter the Atlantic Flyway by way of New York and Pennsylvania. They cut "across the grain" of the Central and Mississippi flyways to reach the duck food-rich coasts of the Atlantic seaboard states. The main canvasback wintering grounds are the wide bays and sounds of Maryland and Virginia—Chesapeake Bay country—where great, shimmering rafts of cans and redheads resemble so many thousands of bleach bottles bobbing in the waves.

In migration flights these ducks form great V formations high in the sky, a sight practically guaranteed to hold the upturned eye for as long as the trailing duck remains in sight.

Canvasbacks visit large lakes, rivers, and some ponds, but mostly they are found in the "big water" of coastal bays. They raft far offshore at night but move closer to shore to feed during the day, taking wide "constitutional" flights to and fro over the feeding grounds for their health, I suppose.

In Florida they winter all along the northern coastal areas, mostly on the Gulf coast, though a few are taken in southern parts of the state. Some cans migrate southward to the northern West Indies and to Guatamala before returning northward in early spring. They arrive back on the nesting grounds on the heels of the last snows.

This species is fairly easily identified by two

good characters: (1) their colors and color pattern—dark head, light body, dark tail, and (2) the distinctly wedge-shaped head and bill. The wedge is formed by a continuously sloping line from the forehead to the end of the bill. (Redheads, while quite similar to cans in coloration, have rounded heads and shorter bills. The difference in the profiles of the two is quite noticeable.)

Canvasbacks are superb divers and underwater swimmers in addition to being the strongest, fastest flyers of all the ducks. They use feet *and* wings for propulsion while submerged, and can feed in depths up to 30 feet.

Their diet consists primarily of plant material—wild celery and other weeds and grasses pulled from the bottom and carried to the surface to be eaten. Cans are gluttonous feeders. They often appear to be choking to death on great strands of grass or roots of water lilies. The rush to “get it down” is probably spurred by the thieving tendencies of some of their neighbors, who, being less qualified as divers, wait for the cans to pop to the surface and rob

them of their hard-earned food. Baldpates are particularly noted for this freeloading practice.

One aspect of the kingly canvasback's eating habits is not to its credit. It is written that, on occasion, he will gorge himself on the rotting flesh of dead salmon out on the Pacific coast rivers. This would naturally eliminate those particular canvasbacks from the “top table duck” status they enjoy generally.

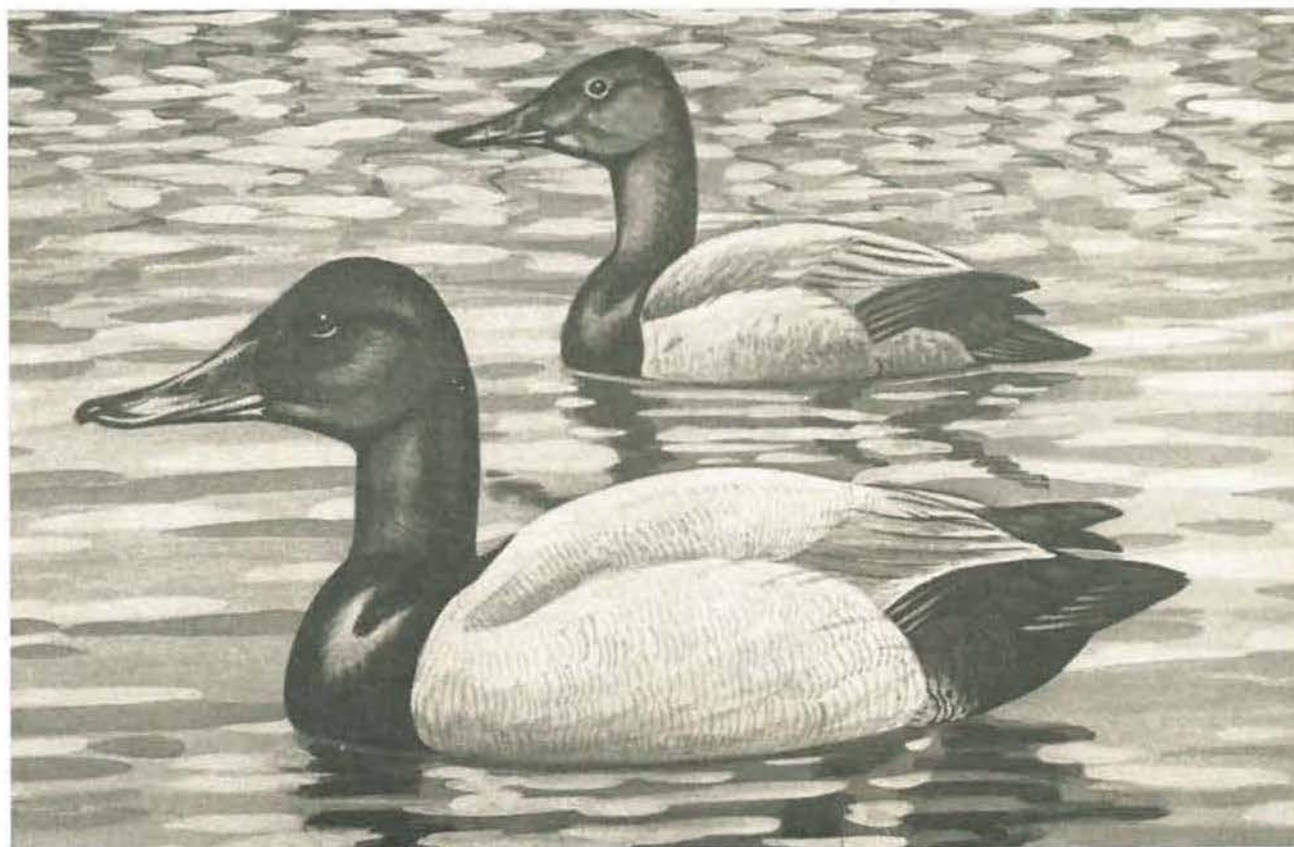
Call it a quirk or a contradiction of nature, but the wily canvasback is also curious. Literature records they can be “tolled” into gun range from far offshore by unusual noises or sights. One such means that seems to have worked was to run a small, yapping dog up and down the shore in front of a blind with a handkerchief tied to its collar. Cans and redheads have been enticed into range in this manner, being simply unable to resist investigating the strange goings on. Once in too far, the gunners had the advantage because of the necessary running takeoff these divers employ to get on the wing.

There are better, more sporting ways to hunt ducks. Just-arriving cans decoy quite readily. After they've been around on a good feeding area a few days, however, they get wise to decoys and thundersticks, carefully avoiding even the best of spreads at times. But when they face the wind and come pitching in, feet and legs extended, mighty wings cupped to “brake” their speed, all the cold waiting and lost sleep suddenly are worth it . . . if you remember to push off your safety. ●

By GENE SMITH

The drake canvasback is whiter and a little larger than his mate. Both have the telltale wedge-shaped head, as can be seen in photo, above left, and in artwork below, showing male at bottom; female above. Cans are again on the scarce side this season, but things are looking up.

Illustrations By Wallace Hughes



Grins and Groans



By EDMUND McLAURIN

IT IS A COMMONLY shared opinion among all sportsmen that Lady Luck plays a definite role in the success or failure of most of their activities and endeavors. It is as though she really exists as some sort of spirit that goes around smiling on some and frowning on others, as her whimsical mood dictates.

Among the sports, hunting and fishing must provide more than their share of both amusing and sorrowful experiences—depending on the fickle lady's mood. Anyone who hunts and fishes long enough will accumulate memories of such experiences all his (or her) own, some of which evoked grins; others, groans.

For example, a lot of grins have been produced by the imaginative use of building materials by deer hunters in erecting tree stands from which to hunt. I have seen in use old doors, barrels, kitchen table tops, old overstuffed living room chairs, and even toilet seats, complete with lids. All seemed to be serving the purpose pretty well.

About 14 hunting seasons ago, members of a certain Marion County hunting club decided they would concentrate their deer hunting activity along the edges of one of the sandy roads in the Ocala National Forest.

Specifically, the idea was to build a row of tree stands along one side of a then-little used road. But because of the possibility of their being used by annoying "stand jumpers," the platforms were built without climbing nails, ladders, or other easy access devices. The idea seemed ingenious and fool-proof. To get in and out of them, a truck carrying a long ladder would move along the road just before daylight, place the club members in their stands, and pick them up at noon.

The idea worked like a charm for a couple of days—until the truck broke down back at camp and was unable to make its midday run.

The standers were stranded, but good! Most were too high to jump down, and there was no other

way of getting to the ground, except to chance a precarious, scraping slide down the rough tree trunk.

Most of them elected to sit tight until a rescue vehicle and ladder put in an appearance about sundown. For those unlucky men it had been a long, dry, hungry wait—and an unforgettable day.

Now shed a tear for the guy, and others like him, who built a turkey hunting blind so well camouflaged he could never find it again! It has happened time and again, partly because things just don't look the same in broad daylight and when you're entering the same woods in the darkness of early morning.

Much the same thing can happen when one leaves his gun or a garment at a spot while making a short, exploratory walk. Numerous hunters have left guns, garments, and camp stools, and were never able to find them again. Their fault? Maybe so. Go ahead and grin, but keep in mind that it could happen to you.

Share the groans and anger of the Florida bowhunter who killed a nice buck only to have it stolen from him.

The hunter made a lethal hit, but the buck ran 80 yards or so in the direction of a road before falling. Just as he stumbled and fell dead in the

road, a truck appeared. The driver and another man hurriedly scrambled out, hoisted the deer over the tailgate, and drove away, leaving a shouting, angry bowhunter only yards behind. (Who, unfortunately, was unable to get their tag number.)

All tree standers who build their own platforms and then have to contend with trespassers who beat them into the woods will growl with the Florida hunter who went forth in a hard rain to build his stand, only to find a stand jumper in it the next morning. It has happened too many times.

Rightful owners now are becoming more defensive. There is something they can do about the problem. Once on the scene, and if the interloper is uncooperative, the owner conspicuously and resolutely remains by the stand until the unauthorized occupancy ends. Usually, the guy will realize no

deer is going to come around as long as the coughing and movement continue down below.

There need be no argument; not even any discussion after the initial polite request for him to move on. The choice is the trespasser's. The smarter he is, the quicker he will move off and hunt elsewhere without wasting any more precious hunting time—his or yours.

Share a grin over this true incident.

The War Between the States is now more than a century past, but some descendants of the Southern forces evidently still hold some good humored animosity toward their Northern counterparts.

It was noon, and a group of bowhunters had met on a woods road to eat lunch and talk over the morning's hunt. At the spot, the sandy road branched into a "Y." One road led directly to a Game and Fish Commission check station; the other meandered hither and yon through the woods but also led, eventually, to the area of the check station.

A lone hunter approached the group and asked, "Which of these roads leads to the check station by the highway?"

A southerner in the group, sitting by a tree eating a can of pork and beans, replied—by way of a cautious question, "Are you a Yankee or a Rebel?"

"What difference does *that* make?" the puzzled hunter inquired.

"About three miles!" was the reply.

On another tack, here's a groan you may have shared with many another angler. Did you ever go fishing with a brand new outfit only to lose it overboard on the first or second cast? Or have you ever lost prescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, or even false teeth overboard? It happens with knives, pipes, lighters, and fishing pliers, too.

But a worse loss occurred recently when a St. Petersburg party boat fisherman, while fighting a hooked shark, had his rod-holding hand banged sharply against the rail on the boat. The jolt loosened a one-carat diamond from his ring. All he could do was groan as he watched the glistening stone disappear into the green depths of the Gulf of Mexico!

Most deer hunters are prosaic personalities, mostly inclined to dress traditionally and for comfort. A few—a very few—add a clownish personal touch that sometimes borders on the bizarre.

One Florida deer hunter makes it a practice to annually go into the woods outfitted in attire markedly incongruous with the sport of deer hunting. He isn't considered "squirrel food"; he's just a nonconformist who likes to hunt deer with added zest and in sartorial splendor above and beyond the ordinary.

Once he hunted dressed in diplomat's striped
(Continued on next page)

the red flannels
and black
derby "camouflage"



(Continued from preceding page)

pants, long-tailed coat and a top hat! (After the brush had knocked the hat off several times, he punched holes in the brim and tied it to his ears.)

Another season he hunted in a pair of oversize red flannel long drawers—complete with drop seat—worn over his other hunting clothing. The conspicuous outfit was fashionably and impressively enhanced by the addition of a black derby hat and a long, tilted cigar held jauntily in the mouth.

Unless you've seen it yourself, you can't imagine how startled and amused you can be to see a fellow hunter wearing red flannel drawers, a derby, and an unlighted cigar cautiously stalking through the woods! You may not want to laugh, but chances are you'll be unable to avoid it.

Shed real tears for the unfortunate Florida hunter who gave up many assorted pleasures to save for an expensive Weatherby big game rifle and a hunting trip to Canada.

After many years of denial, he had the money. His first step was to buy the Weatherby. Soon afterward, he completed negotiations with a professional Canadian outfitter for his trip.

The night before he was to fly to Canada, he took his new rifle to his garage workshop and carefully checked it for smooth operation. He next inspected the bore, then gave the metal surfaces a final protective coating. Fondly—almost reverently—he slipped the readied rifle into its case and set it with his other gear and baggage.

Two days later he was happily camped deep in the Canadian woods, after a tiring pack horse trip from civilization.

After the evening meal, the Floridian began making preparations for his first hunt. Personal items were assembled and checked, then the rifle was removed from its case. He was dumbfounded. The bolt was missing! He had left it on his workbench when he cleaned the rifle. (Fortunately, the guide had a spare rifle for him to use, but the hunt wasn't quite the same without his new Weatherby.)

For years, a man and his wife hunted deer along a section of the pipeline that runs through the Ocala National Forest. Theirs was one of the most unusual arrangements in the forest—a two-party wheelbarrow safari!

While the husband slowly walked 200 yards ahead, carefully scanning the brush for game, his wife followed pushing a lightweight wheelbarrow containing folding canvas seats, rainjackets, a coil of rope, lunch, thermos jug, and several magazines.

Whenever the mood hit them, they stopped and set up temporary rest camp, and when they did get a deer—as happened on several occasions—the wheelbarrow made easy work of transporting the kill to their parked car.

Hunters remember them fondly.

Now share the grief and anger of two Floridians

fishing from a canoe at a deep spot on a bend of the lower Oklawaha River.

A large outboard craft, with a 100 h.p. motor hitting on high, suddenly appeared around a nearby channel turn and, without cutting speed, roared past the canoe and its occupants. The speeding boat never slowed—even when its heavy wake overturned the canoe.

The two dunked fishermen were able to reach shore safely, but all their fishing tackle and other property was irretrievably lost. One had a fine prewar model Colt Woodsman .22 caliber handgun in his tacklebox.

On a light note, one day waders were out in great numbers vying for fish-filled spots along another Florida river. Most of the anglers were wearing hip boots; some chest-high waders. One fellow, however, had chosen a low-profile inflated tube with canvas seat and holes for his legs.

It so chanced that a nylon jacket he was wearing practically hid the small rubber tube from view.

An approaching boat's occupants saw the angler land a nice fish. Believing they had found a good fishing spot of wading depth, one of them pulled on a pair of hip boots, grabbed his rod and reel, and stepped overboard—into 12 feet of water.

Besides the hunter types we mentioned who wear tuxedos and red long johns, there are others who



simply won't conform to custom. For the most part, they are neither dumb nor objectionably contrary. They merely like to do things their own way, right or wrong.

Two duck hunters were preparing to shove off in separate skiffs to reach their blinds before the first flights. Each had the usual assortment of duck hunting gear. The weather was really cold, and there was a biting wind to constantly serve as a reminder.

One hunter carefully stowed his gun and gear in his skiff, not only grouping items according to relation and need, but balancing the load and wisely checking his shotgun a final time to make sure it was unloaded.

The other man merely dumped his equipment into his boat. He next took time to load a new, unused, unfamiliar autoloading shotgun—and he thought he put the safety “on.” He didn’t want to miss getting a shot at any duck that might put in an appearance immediately after legal shooting hour, perhaps catching him still tossing out decoys or paddling toward his blind. The loaded gun was placed in the boat with the muzzle down and pointed toward the stern.

He shoved off, and in the darkness, while fumbling under his gear for a paddle, something poked through the trigger guard of the shotgun and . . . you guessed it! The gun was not on “safety,” as supposed. The blast literally blew out the transom of the skiff. Within seconds, icy-cold water filled the shallow craft. Heavily loaded, it quickly went down in eight feet of water—gun, gear, hunter and all.

If there is a moral here, and there is, it is never transport a loaded gun in boat or car—even if you believe the safety mechanism is “on.” Otherwise you may have reason to groan, too, if lucky enough to still be alive, with all your companions.

Finally, smile as you share the story of the eager deer hunter who visited a promising area late on the afternoon before opening day of the season, and, while looking around, spotted a certain tree crotch for occupancy the next morning.

An hour before daylight, the hunter was silently hunched down in his stand, rather pleased with his choice of a spot with such a good view of the deer woods below.

But when the sun came up, he discovered the tree he had chosen was also the home of a swarm of bees.

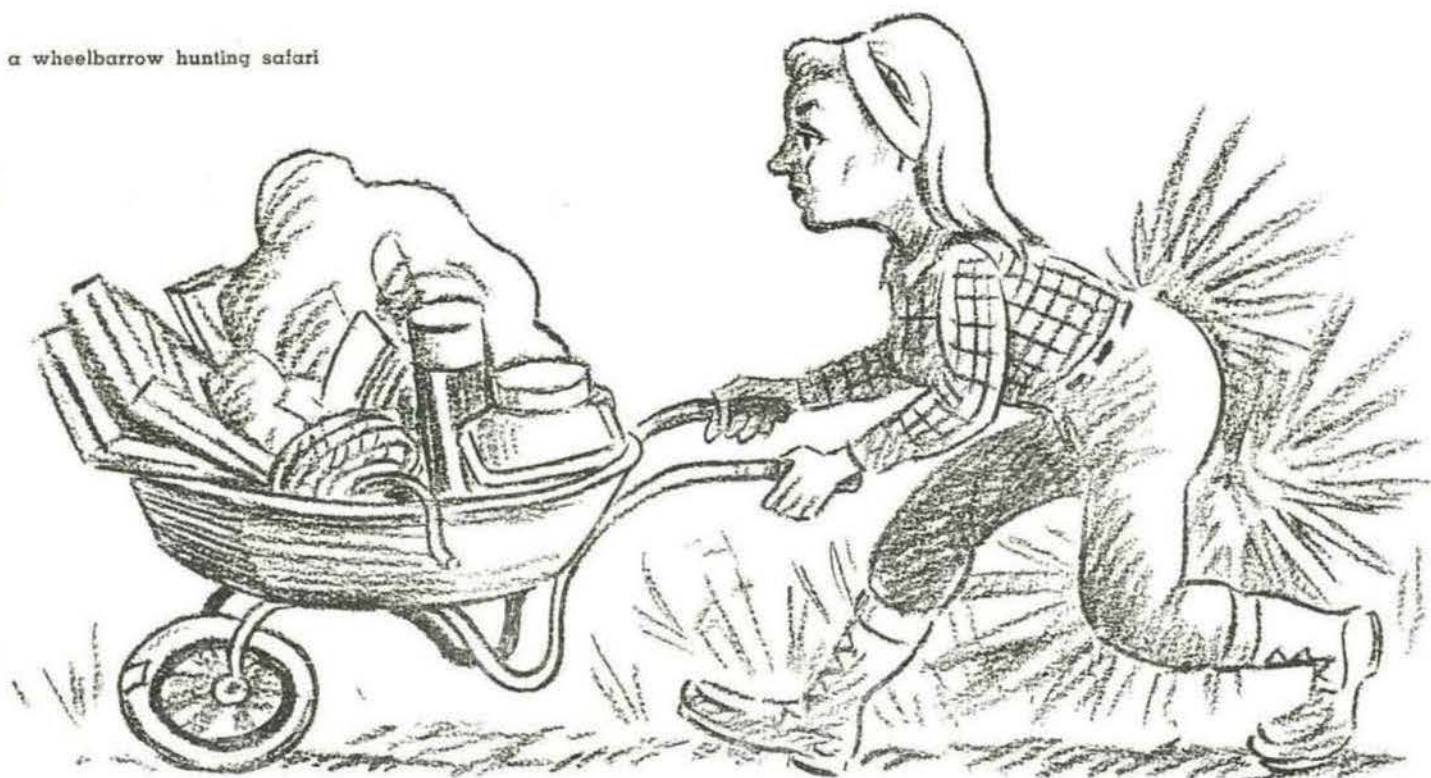
When several of them buzzed him and lit on his clothing, the hunter did not wait to find out their intentions. He slapped at them savagely, figuring—erroneously—that inaction would result in being stung. His aggression only served to make the insects truly angry, of course.

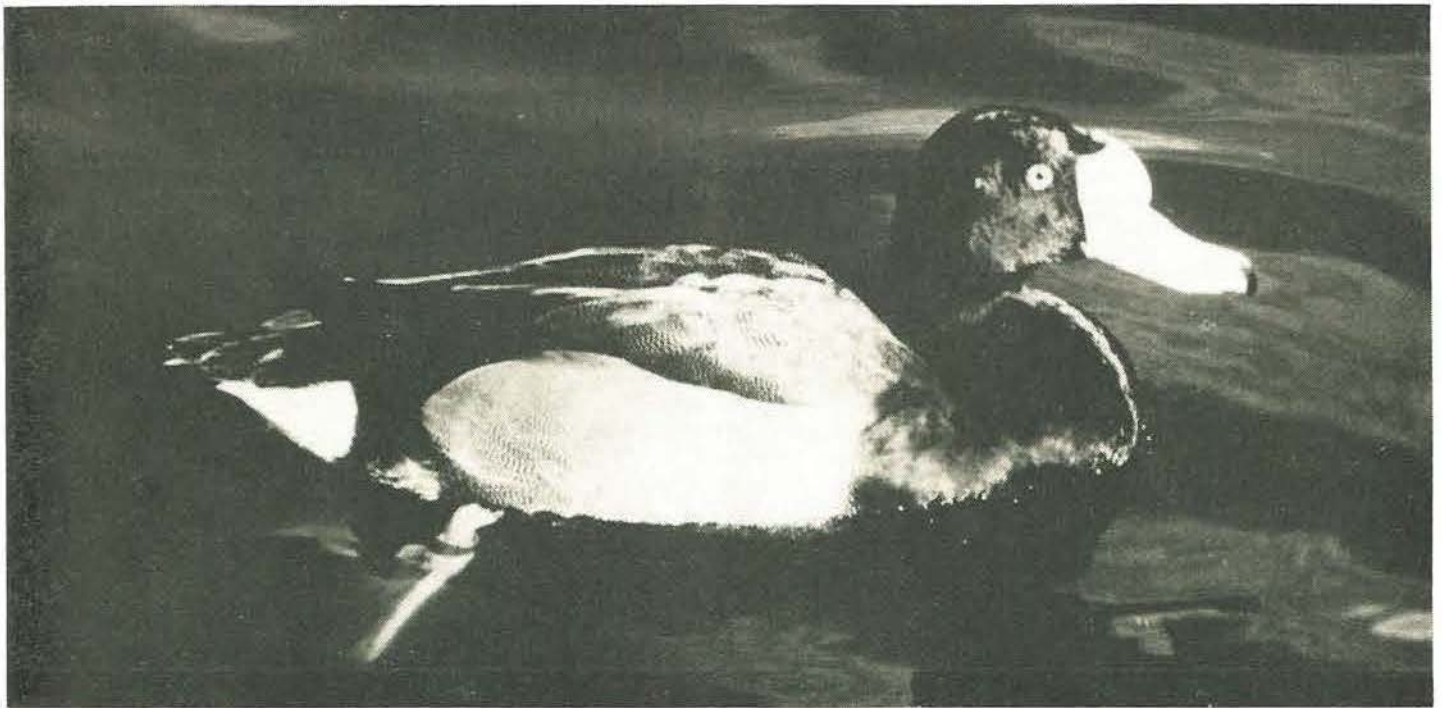
As if rallying to the battle cry, they poured out of the hollow and gave the desperate fellow several pointed and warm remembrances before he could climb down and flee the scene.

And so it goes—wherever hunters and fishermen pursue their sports. Quite likely you have had one or more experiences that, in grins or groans, equal or top the ones you have just read.

Let's hope your grins have outnumbered your groans—and I hope they always will. ●

a wheelbarrow hunting safari





Exotic Waterfowl Project

fascinating facts about ducks from "way, way down south"

RARELY HAS A Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission wildlife research biologist been handed a more exciting and exotic assignment than E. Dale Crider. For 18 months Dale and his family lived in Argentina and combed the marshes and wetlands studying several species of South American waterfowl.

The purpose of the trip—and the project—was to determine the suitability of certain ducks for possible introduction into the United States, including weighing the risk of ecological damage that might be associated with introduction.

The Division of Wildlife Research, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Department of the Interior, sponsored the South American Waterfowl Research Project. They temporarily "borrowed" Dale for the Argentine assignment. For many years he has been project leader of the Commission's waterfowl research program.

I had the great good fortune of spending three months in Argentina with Dale during the fall of 1969. I am a waterfowl ecologist with a research interest in the program as chairman of the Southeastern Exotic Waterfowl Committee, which consists of three representatives from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, waterfowl biologists from Louisiana, Tennessee, Florida, and myself. Our mission as a committee is to assemble and screen the available knowledge on the species which are candidates for introduction, to weigh the ecological risks, encourage the needed research—in both Ar-

gentina and the Southeastern United States—prior to release, and eventually to make recommendations to the participating states and the BSF&W as to whether we should attempt introduction.

In addition to the work Dale performed in Argentina, experimental programs are underway to see if the Argentine waterfowl can be encouraged to breed in captivity. This work is being carried on at the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, and at the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's cooperative facilities with The Wildlife Conservancy, Inc., in Naples, Florida, where some modest nesting is underway. (One of the ground rules in the project is that birds brought from Argentina will not be released in the wild. Rather, it is planned to do field experiments with the young produced in captivity from the imported stock.)

A first step in the screening of candidates for introduction into unoccupied habitats is to identify those waterfowl living in a place that is climatically similar to where they will be introduced. These bio-climatographic comparisons were made by Dr. Gardiner Bump, the well-known leader of the BSF&W's Foreign Game Investigation Program.

Dr. Bump, with the assistance of another noted waterfowl biologist, Dr. Milton Weller of Iowa State University, selected the Argentine waterfowl species Dale has been studying: the Rosy-billed Pochard, the Bahama Pintail, the Muscovy, the Yellow-billed Pintail, and the Brazilian Teal. Every one of these species has a high esthetic appeal and is very

popular among South American hunters, who place the highest trophy value on the Rosy-billed Pochard, Brazilian Teal, and Muscovy—in that order.

After designating the candidate species, the second step in the screening process was to obtain as much information as possible about the birds in their native habitat. This was Dale Crider's assignment.

During the course of his studies he and his family not only roamed the diverse habitats of Argentina but also worked in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia. His project included duck trapping and banding, color marking to determine local movements, aerial surveys, nesting studies, breeding biology, brood survival, behavior, and a host of similar details involving techniques familiar to all waterfowl researchers.

Dale's wife, Mary Virginia, and their three children all traveled into the field when the work permitted a family team approach, but they had their home base in a thick-walled stucco house in Guadalupe, a suburb of Santa Fe in Buenos Aires Province, near the center of Argentina.

Much of the field research was done near the thriving industrial city of Venado Tuerto, on the outskirts of a charming village called San Eduardo. The Criders fitted well in Argentina and made the best kind of working ambassadors of good will. Dale's string music, a longtime hobby of his, delighted the Argentines. His guitar accompanied him on all his travels.

Maurice Rumboll, a heavily-bearded native Argentine biologist, aided Dale immeasurably in his research. Maurice, who is more British in his behaviorisms than your stereotyped image of a Britisher, was project assistant. He intends to become the Aldo Leopold of Argentina—the father of wildlife management in his country as Leopold was in America. He is well on his way to having a very significant impact on the management of wildlife resources in Argentina. I think it would have been impossible for Dale to have had his tremendous success in acquisition of data without the help of Maurice.

The two of them, incidentally, had a strong "Mutt
(Continued on next page)

By **GEORGE CORNWELL**
Associate Professor, Wildlife Ecology
University of Florida

The Rosy-billed Pochard, above left, is a South American relative of our Redhead, Scaup and Canvasback ducks. It is a candidate for introduction into Florida marshes; is a hunter's favorite. Argentine biologist Rumboll, below, holds two others, the Yellow-billed and Bahama pintails. Commission biologist Dale Crider, right, holds a pochard and others collected during his waterfowl investigation.



(Continued from preceding page)

and Jeff" look about them and created a sensation wherever they walked together. Dale is extremely thin and stands nearly 7 feet tall, while Maurice is about 5 feet tall and moderately rotund. Obviously, both of them appeared to be foreigners to the Argentine nationals.

Dale's favorite among the waterfowl species he studied was the Rosy-billed Pochard. It is a large bird, about the size of a Canvasback, the male weighing 2½ to 3 pounds. It's a purple-black color above and on the breast, while the belly and sides are a vermiculated black and white. The bill is a bright, rosy pink with a crimson knob near the forehead. The speculum, or wing patch, is white and quite visible in flight.

The Rosybill is a very wary duck and a trophy prized by many Argentine hunters. It breeds over a wide area of southern Brazil, coastal Uruguay, along the Parana River valley through Paraguay and Argentina, but densest in the rice growing areas north of Santa Fe. The lakes and marshes of Buenos Aires Province are particularly important breeding areas for the species, which is closely related to the Canvasback and Redhead ducks of North America, both extremely popular with waterfowl hunters.

Dale was particularly interested in determining to what extent the Argentine Rosy-billed Pochard is migratory. Their movements appeared to be of relatively short length and induced by water and food needs—local migrations rather than the long distance migratory behavior we normally associate with most North American waterfowl species.

The Rosybill is regarded as a problem species by many of the rice growers of Argentina. Its habit of nesting in the rice fields apparently leads to considerable crop damage, for there is a great effort by the growers and their employees to reduce the

numbers of ducks nesting in the rice—by shooting. These birds are sold in the marketplace and are a favored source of meat.

Other than during the nesting period, Rosybills are wary and extremely difficult to shoot. Not only are the birds hard to bring down when they are in gun range (because of their thick coat of feathers), but they tend to fly quite a distance offshore. Usually they are either out of range or right on the edge of it.

Rosybills are frequently seen in the company of Fulvous Whistling Ducks. Dale thinks it is possible that some of the damage to the rice crops is done



Photos By George Cornwell



by the Whistling Ducks and blamed on the Rosy-billed Pochards.

The Rosybill nests over water, so this might help it survive the predation which appears to be so heavy in our Southern marshes.

Another species being worked with was the Yellow-billed Pintail. This bird is also called Chilean Pintail and Brown Pintail. It is the most numerous of South American waterfowl, and greatly outnumbers the other species in Argentina. It prefers open marsh and shallow lake habitat in association with upland pastures and croplands. It is quick to move into marshes that are temporarily filled by heavy rains. Indeed, this bird, like some of the Australian ducks studied by other researchers, appears to be more regulated in its reproduction by rainfall than day length or other possible environmental stimuli to breeding.

Much of the range of the Yellowbill is arid for most of the year and sometimes for several years in a row. Through some undetermined mechanism the birds appear able to sense heavy rains hundreds of miles away and move into the area with the rain—to an ample water supply to sustain nesting.

Dale was fortunate enough to work with a dense breeding population of Yellow-billed Pintails in southern Santa Fe Province. He had hundreds of nesting pairs in the San Eduardo marshes. As a result, he was able to monitor the eggs of nesting birds to study incubation temperatures, nesting attentiveness, and other interesting phenomena related to waterfowl nesting biology.

The nesting behavior of the Yellowbill is particularly intriguing in that unlike the Pintail of North America, the sexes seem to remain paired for the entire year. The male attends the female throughout nesting and assists in caring for the brood. The pair bond seems unusually strong in this species.

I am convinced that Dale's research report, when published, will become a classic among the monographs written on waterfowl biology.

Unfortunately, the world of science will never know all the colorful details of how a Florida waterfowl biologist—and a transplanted Kentucky "Bluegrass" musician at that—turned gaucho on the pampas. That is another story entirely—and one that, perhaps, Mary Virginia will someday write.

Man, both intentionally and accidentally, has moved much of the world's fauna from its original habitat. We have had outstanding successes in North America with such game birds as the pheasant, the Hungarian Partridge, and the Chukar Partridge. Dr. Bump's study team, in addition, has many other foreign game birds and hybrids under study with field tests in the United States. Several show exceptional promise.

For example, the Spotted Tinamou, which has sporting characteristics intermediate to the Bobwhite Quail and the Ruffed Grouse, would seem to be a highly favored candidate for Florida's improved pastures.

There have been sufficient successes to lend encouragement to the idea that we may someday find a new waterfowl species that can successfully live and reproduce in the marshes of the South. If we do this, it will take a great deal of harvest pressure off the migratory North American species of ducks.

We should discover why our Southern marshes now are lacking in significant numbers of breeding waterfowl. Why haven't such species as the Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, and Gadwall successfully occupied them?

I'm sure most wildlife managers believe it unwise to introduce exotic wildlife that will be harmful to native populations. This possibility is precisely what wildlife research with exotics hopes to avoid.

Whatever the final decision on the introduction and ultimate release of Rosybills, Bahama Pintails, and the rest, the data gathered by our Pampas Buccaneer, E. Dale Crider, will be treasured new knowledge about some of the world's most interesting, and least studied waterfowl. ●

Biologist Crider, above left, records weight data from South American ducks. Pair of Yellow-billed Pintails, left, are the most numerous waterfowl in Argentina. They prefer shallow lakes and marshes similar to much south Florida habitat. Another of the species, right, is the Bahama Pintail, colorful candidate for possible introduction up here.





Storied Torrey State Park in northwest Florida overlooks the equally historic Apalachicola River—with "mountainous" view hardly an average visitor's image of this part of the country.

Florida's "Garden of Eden"

STANDING HIGH on a bluff in Torrey State Park, looking across the Apalachicola River at a tapestry of lush forest, could make even some native Floridians reach for a road map and exclaim, "This can't be Florida!"

But it is Florida—north Liberty County—a rugged topography in miniature of the mountains of north Georgia, Virginia, or western North Carolina.

From the summit of the park's Neals Bluff spreads a panorama of wild growth including not only pines, wild cherries, poplars, beeches, elms, and magnolias, all so characteristic of Southern mountain areas, but also mysterious trees and plants to be found in their natural growth nowhere else in the world. Many legends and beliefs have arisen around these.

Although Torrey is a unique state park, it is little visited, for tourists must travel somewhat off the beaten path to reach it. Motorists can take State Road 12 southward from U.S. Highway 90, passing through the town of Greensboro, or they may drive northward from Bristol on State Road 20. The fa-

miliar white-on-blue Florida State Park signs guide travelers along the way. Once there, the feast of natural beauty weaves its spell, and campers, picnickers, fishermen, botanists, and history buffs can almost believe they're in the Garden of Eden!

Indeed, a local judge, E. E. Calloway of Bristol, has done considerable research, Biblical and otherwise, and has written extensively to prove his theory that these banks of Florida's Apalachicola River border the true Garden of Eden described in the Book of Genesis—not the fabled valley of the Euphrates, where not a trace of verdant beauty remains today. (More about this subject a little later in the story.)

With Torrey State Park there are so many stories to be told, it's hard to know where to begin. Perhaps it's best to go back to Neals Bluff—a height of land past which Florida history has traveled on the red river below.

From this strategic height, historians have surmised, lookouts guarded against ambush when prim-

itive men in dugouts plied the waterway thousands of years before the birth of Christ.

Indians used this river to reach the Gulf of Mexico, and Spanish explorers followed it northward in search of riches. During the colonial period the river was the highway for traders, settlers, runaway slaves, and hostile Seminoles. And when General Andrew Jackson and his army marched along its banks during his Florida campaign in 1818, Neals Bluff was the height of land where scouts were posted.

Finally, when Florida became a Territory of the United States, Neals Bluff became the site not of the old Jason Gregory house that stands there now, but the home of his brother, Charles, whose house is said to have been identical to Jason's but which burned and has long since vanished without a trace.

Today, Neals Bluff is backed by the 1,063-acre Torreya State Park, keeping for the public a precious chunk of wilderness of the same sort that attracted prominent botanists of the last century with its lush and unusual flora.

Among the steep, forested hills and ravines along this river, 50 miles west of Tallahassee, can be found an amazing variety of flowers, shrubs, and trees, representative of both the subtropic and temperate climates.

Bible lore resounds through these woods. Old-

timers in the vicinity will tell you nearly every one of the 30-odd trees mentioned in the Good Book are found here. There are pines, hickories, oaks, sweet gums, maples, birches, lindens—the list goes on and on.

The perfect time to view these trees is in the fall, when the Northwest Florida hardwoods can rival the autumnal coloration of northern forests. The gum and persimmon leaves turn red and purple; oaks, dogwood, sumac, and sourwoods are scarlet; hickory, tulip, and cherry leaves are yellow; and the sycamore, elm, and beech are russet. All these colors against a rich background of evergreens really have to be seen to be appreciated.

But the tree of trees, the one most people come to see in this wooded wonderland, is the rare and ill-fated Florida torreya (*Torreya taxifolia*), which is native to no other region in the world but a strip several miles wide and 20 miles long on the east bank of the Apalachicola River.

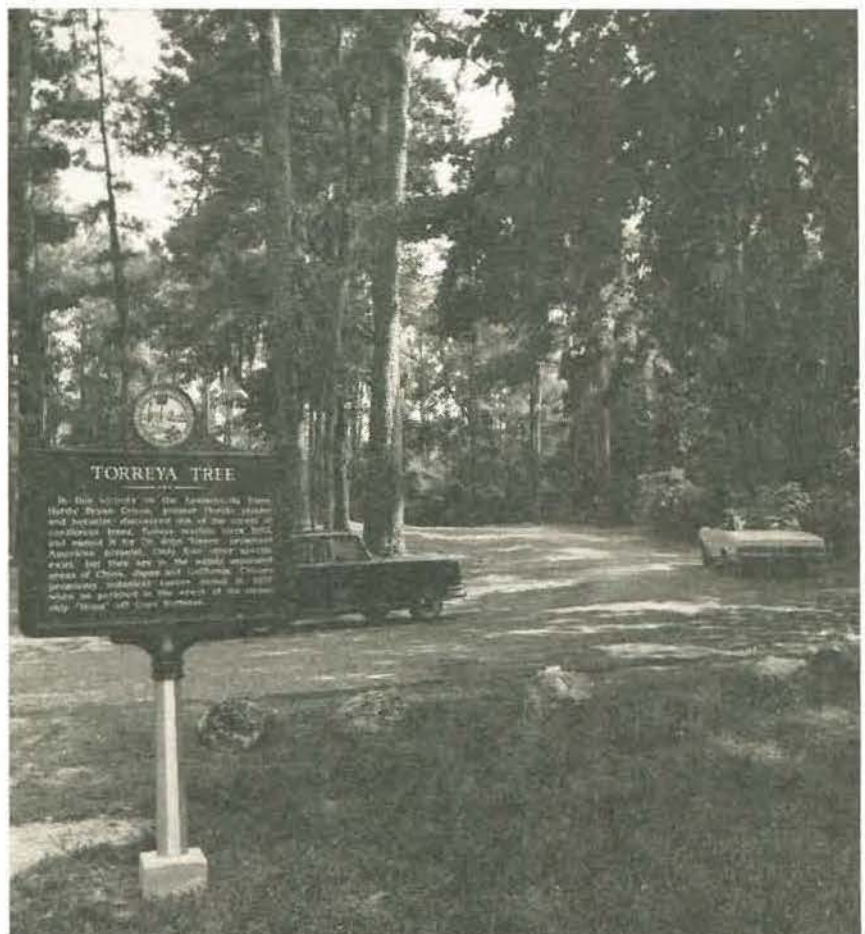
Later discoveries have brought to light similar, yet distinctly different, members of the yew family in California (*T. californica*) and in the Orient (*T. grandis* and *T. nucifera*), a distribution which leads experts to believe that at one time the torreya tree was common all over the North Temperate Zone.

The torreya may be one of the world's rarest
(Continued on next page)

By VIRGINIA NEWMAN

The quiet and serenity of the steeply wooded park, with its rare trees, is especially appealing to a park visitor who prefers to avoid crowds. Historic marker, right, gives the story of the torreya tree discovered in 1835 by Hardy B. Croom, Tallahassee.

Photos From Division of Florida State Parks



(Continued from preceding page)

trees, but it's known to local people by at least five common names: gopherwood, torreyia wood, savin, stinking savin and stinking cedar. The last two come from the strong odor given off from the sap and from the leaves and seed when crushed. Some say it reminds them of the smell of green tomatoes.

Under ideal growing conditions, the torreyia tree does not attain a height of more than 50 feet nor a diameter of more than 25 inches. The branches and twigs are lined with flat, stiff needles about an inch and a half long and an eighth of an inch wide. They are glossy green on top and a lighter green underneath.

The small, green flowers cluster on the underside of the twigs, and the seed, resembling a green plum or olive about an inch and a half long, consists of a smooth-shelled nut covered by a firm, fleshy pulp. The pulp contains a sticky, milky juice that dries like glue. When fully ripe, the pulp shrivels and turns dark gray in color.

The wood of the torreyia is yellow and has a distinctive, close grain. Although light in weight, it is hard and durable—and, like redwood, does not rot in the ground. Because of these practical attributes, farmers in the region sought it out for fence-posts, resulting in considerable destruction of the original growth.

Too, the local residents found the torreyia made a grand Christmas tree. After being cut, the leaves stayed green for weeks, and the berries added a festive holiday note.

The wood also was found suitable for cabinet-making and for the carving of small novelties such as ashtrays, book ends, and even rosary beads.

The Bible says Noah used "gopherwood" in building the ark. As previously noted, this is a common name for the torreyia tree. Several noted historians point out that this is one reason to believe in this area's Biblical connections. Indeed, the 1967 Florida Legislature passed an act authorizing the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce to cooperate with the Florida State Parks agency in planning and establishing a "... replica of Noah's Ark in Torreya State Park, recognizing the presumption that Torreya State Park is the probable location in the Apalachicola valley where the prophet Noah constructed his ark and saved the remnants of humanity at the time of the Great Flood recorded in the Bible."

Unfortunately, the act appropriated no funds with which to build such a replica. It only authorized the planning bodies to "receive such help as may be possible from the Florida State Museum and from other public and private sources of assistance . . ." To date, no financing has been made available, and there is no replica to be seen there.

The torreyia tree was discovered about 1835 by

Hardy Bryan Croom, a young planter and an amateur botanist of Tallahassee, while enroute to another plantation he owned in Jackson County.

Florida was still a wilderness in those days. Roads were few and little more than trails. Bridges were nonexistent on the larger streams. It was while waiting for the ferry to cross the Apalachicola that Croom's attention was drawn to the adjacent wooded slope and a grove of evergreen trees that differed from anything he had previously observed.

On his return trip he collected specimens for study. Unable to identify the species, he sent specimens to his friend, Dr. John Torrey of Columbia College, New York, the outstanding botanist of the day.

After much study and international record-searching, Dr. Torrey reported back that the tree was a totally new genus—one never before described in botanical literature. At Croom's request, the newly-discovered tree was given Dr. Torrey's name.

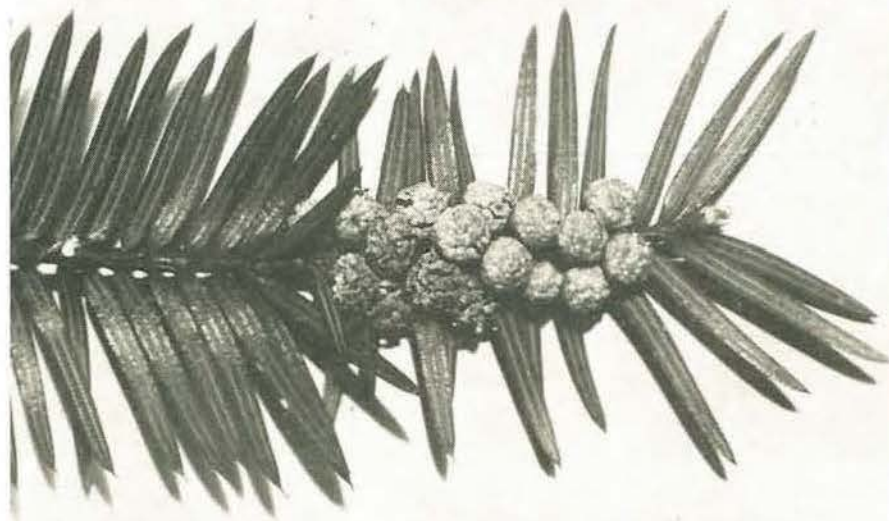
The Florida torreyia tree, botanists agree, is a sort of botanical "ape" that missed the evolutionary boat. One early theory about the tree's origins was that it is a survivor of a species that originated farther north before the Ice Age swept down over the United States, supposedly seeding the alien trees in the South as the ice advanced.

The theory has been discounted, however, since none of the ice ever reached Florida. The area where the torreyia established itself was last under water

Photos From Division of Florida State Parks



The torreya, below left, is not a large tree but one of the rarest conifers on earth. It is native only to a small stretch along east bank of the Apalachicola—it has been transplanted to Maclay Gardens State Park at Tallahassee, and to North Carolina. "Feathery" leaves and aromatic bloom are shown at right.



about 600,000 years ago, say geologists. Wherever *Torrey taxifolia* started, it probably came to Florida after that time and is considered "a relic; a living fossil; a remnant of a vanishing species."

Today, this living fossil is making a desperate last stand for its life. Practically all the torreyas trees within the park are sick—struck by a mysterious blight that threatens to blot this genus from the Florida landscape and the botany books altogether.

None of the park's torreyas are large, although one of the seedlings transplanted by Capt. Fred Ferrell, superintendent of Maclay Gardens State Park near Tallahassee, to his park in the early '30s has grown to a height of about 50 feet and is considered the champion torreyas tree in the state. (Only one known specimen in the U.S. is larger. It was successfully transplanted to North Carolina from Florida sometime during the 1800's and was just recently discovered still growing there.) Still, most of the other specimens Capt. Ferrell has attempted to transplant to Maclay Gardens have suffered from the blight.

The decline in the trees was first noted in the mid-1950's. Plant pathologists of the Florida Department of Agriculture have been studying the situation ever since. They suspect the cause of the disease to be a fungus which was found on dying and dead needles and on twig tips of the affected trees, as well as on the ground debris from the affected trees. The pathologists suggested that any seeds to be distributed to botanical centers in answer to requests—such as to the University of California—be treated first with mercury bichloride.

Despite studies by the U.S. Forest Service, the University of Florida, and others, there still has been no definite diagnosis of just what is killing the torreyas. A breakthrough may be near, however.

From specimens grown in Capt. Ferrell's research center at Maclay Gardens, the U.S. National Ar-

boretum in Washington, D.C. studied the blight. Dr. Frederick G. Meyer, research botanist in charge there visited Maclay and took soil samples from beneath both living and dead torreyas for the purpose of soil analysis. He found a difference in the pH factor of the samples—the hydrogen content. Now, studies are being made to see if the delicate pH factor can be adjusted to keep the trees healthy.

Although the torreyas is the most famous rare tree in Torreya State Park, there are other unique species to be found there. The Florida yew is estimated to be 40 times rarer than the torreyas! Florida yew differs from torreyas principally in its bark and needles. The yew's bark is smooth, its leaves soft, and its odor mild. Florida yew is a low, bushy evergreen, although botanists say at one time it grew to be a large tree.

Hardy Bryan Croom—who was later to lose his life, along with all his family, in a shipwreck off Cape Hatteras, N.C.—discovered other plants in what is now park land. Under the torreyas he found a low-growing, flowering herb which was named in his honor by Dr. Torrey: *Croomia pauciflora*. He also discovered a gorgeous pitcher plant *Sarracenia drummondii*.

Dr. Alvin Wentworth Chapman of Marianna, a famous botanist and the author of a treatise on the flora of the Southern states, was a friend of Croom's, and one of his discoveries, the Chapman oak (*Quercus chapmani*), is in the park.

Perhaps all these rare and beautiful trees and plants inspired the interesting-but-controversial theory expounded by Judge Calloway. He is a well-known Bible scholar and teleologist and believes his Biblical interpretation proves that the land now encompassed by the park was the site of the Garden of Eden.

Calloway points, among other things, to the "river" (Continued on next page)

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of four heads" mentioned in Genesis 2:11-12 and says there is no other river in the world that fits this description as does the Apalachicola. He lists minerals in the area encompassed by the first river, Pison, as the gold, bdellium, and onyx stone, or marble, for which south Georgia is famous. And, of course, he mentions "every tree pleasant to the sight," including the gopherwood trees, which God specified for the building of the ark. He points out that in the limestone formations of the area, the fossilized bones of every animal known to have lived on earth may be found.

Calloway's is, to say the least, a fascinating theory, and anyone who has visited Torreya State Park may find it hard to doubt.

Wildlife is abundant in the park, which teems with rare warblers and other migrants in the spring and fall. And probably every native mammal could be seen there if the visitor could stay long enough.

The park also has a historical side. One of the most beautiful aspects is the Gregory House, where an overhanging balcony provides a spectacular view of the countryside. The house has not always been at its present location, however. Originally, it stood on a low bend of the river on the opposite shore at Ocheese Landing.

Built by Jason Gregory of North Carolina in the 1830's, the house is a two-story, white-columned plantation manor. At that time, the Apalachicola River was the main thoroughfare from Georgia and Alabama through Florida to the Gulf of Mexico. By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, the town of Apalachicola on the Gulf had become the third largest cotton port in the U.S. Fourteen million dollars worth of shipping was passing up and down the river by 1860.

The Gregory House was in the thick of the comings and goings on the river, but life there was abruptly altered by the War Between the States. Confederate guns were mounted on the high bluffs to prevent Union gunboats from coming down the Apalachicola. A Rebel gunboat, the Chattahoochee, patrolled the river, and its officers and crewmen were often guests of the Gregories.

Although Federal troops never came down the river, hard times did. The Gregory family fled in 1873 to escape yellow fever. When the last surviving member of the family died in 1916, the house fell into evil days. The occupants for many years were river roustabouts and bootleggers.

In 1935, the house was given to the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials by the Neal Lumber Company of Blountstown. The house was care-



Torreya State Park is "Tranquility Base" for most visitors. Off the beaten path, it is seldom crowded, even during the summer. Facilities are excellent; family outings are popular. In addition to picnicking, the park offers trailer and tent camping, fishing, trails, and a historic museum tour.

fully dismantled, floated across the river in sections, and reassembled on the high bluff where it now stands. Great effort was made to retain the original lumber, even to the wooden pegs in the flooring.

In recent years, the Gregory House has been authentically furnished in the prevailing fashion of the 1850-60 period—the height of plantation prosperity in the Old South.

The house is open to tourists from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, and from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. The entrance fee is \$1 per person, with children under 12, accompanied by parents, free.

Outdoor recreational facilities are not forgotten at Torreya State Park, naturally. Campers find the large, shady campsites uncrowded even during the summer months. It's an ideal park for the camper who likes to "get away from it all."

For the fishing enthusiast, the Apalachicola often results in a good catch of channel catfish, bass, and redbreast bream. Boating is superb in the park area although there is no launching ramp at Torreya.

Grab your camera, your bird and botany books, your fishing gear, pack the family camper, and take a look. Torreya State Park, Garden of Eden or not, is beautiful at every season, but fall finds it at its finest. ●

For information about Florida State Parks, write:
Division of Florida State Parks
Department of Natural Resources
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Muzzle Flashes

HUNTING

there is a variety of "entries" for the hunter whose gun care interest equals actual field trips, including sight changes and portable reloading kits



By EDMUND McLAURIN

SCOPE SIGHTS are "in" this year. Practically every rifle purchased will have a telescopic sight. Even hunters who have used metallic sight combinations successfully for years are changing over to the scope. The background of the changeover makes good sense.

A scope sight gives greatly improved view of the target, especially under poor light conditions, which, if too poor, make iron sights virtually useless. Furthermore, with a scope sight a shooter becomes a better hunter because he can place his shots more accurately.

Hunting safety is greatly enhanced, too, by use of a scope because target identification is more positive.

Telescopic sights are not 20th Century creations. Crude models were successfully used in warfare as long ago as the period of The War Between the States, and by buffalo hunters.

But as a sporting firearm accessory, they had relatively slow acceptance. Only after World War I did scopes begin to find favor with sportsmen.

The best instruments were usually imported models, mostly Zeiss and Hensoldt manufactures, used on American-made Griffin & Howe and Belding & Mull mounts. Two American firms, Lyman and Fecker, brought out their own models. Winchester had a simple instrument, the A-5.

Adoption of scope sights was slowed only because of initial scarcity of practical, dependable scope

mounts. In fact, there were numerous early makers of optically good scopes, but only a low ratio of pioneers in the field of manufacturing practical scope mounts to fit a variety of rifle models. American ingenuity eventually solved the problem.

Really widespread adoption of the scope sight began to take place when Bill Weaver, now the world's largest maker of scopes, introduced good-but-inexpensive models, complete with mounts, back in 1930.

Today there are more than 30 brands of scope sights—and just about as many manufacturers of scope mounts.

As with any other merchandise, there are good scopes and bad ones. Most of the good ones are fairly expensive, simply because it takes costly labor and maintenance of high manufacturing standards to produce a truly fine scope.

It is true, as a budget-minded shooter recently pointed out to me, that some makers of low cost scopes guarantee their products and give free servicing when defects develop. But a faulty scope must be removed from the rifle to be returned to the factory, and sighted in again when it comes back reconditioned.

Where center fire ammunition is used, the ultimate cost of a faulty, low-priced scope—even with free servicing—can be considerable to an already inconvenienced owner. That's why I use only the best brands. Simply, I save until the day I can purchase a good one.

So evident is the interest of sportsmen in scope sights that some of the old, well-known firms are discontinuing manufacture of metallic sights.

Redfield, for example, is dropping its many different models of receiver peep sights to concentrate on making scopes and metallic sights intended for competitive shooting. Their 1970 bid for the scope buyer's dollar is the new "Widefield" line.

Weaver, not to be outdone, has a new line of aluminum alloy tube scope models they call the "Classic" line. These will supplement the already familiar Weaver "K" models with steel tubes.

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It takes a few practice sessions to become thoroughly familiar with a scope sight—try hitting moving "game" figure targets.

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Latest entry into the scope market is the Williams Gun Sight Company. When Boyd Williams was down South recently for some trap shooting competition he told me his firm would shortly announce a line of high quality, precision-adjusting hunting scopes that would be guaranteed waterproof. He said the scopes were being made in Japan to exacting American specifications and quality controls.

The new scopes are now on the market. They are made in fixed 4X, along with choice of 1½X-4½X, 2X-6X, and 3X-9X variable power models. (It has been found that a ratio of 3-to-1 in variable power models is best optically.)

Reticule styles are offered in conventional crosshair, the Williams-developed "Guide Line," a combination post and horizontal crosshair, a thick and thin combination wire reticule called "T-N-T," and the dot style reticule.

For Florida use, the 1½X-4½X variable is recommended. Our thick brush shooting calls for low power magnification and broad field of view.

SPORTING AMMUNITION is fast rising in price despite huge volume production. A primary reason for this is that the market price of raw brass and lead have skyrocketed.

Each empty center fire cartridge case represents a substantial portion of a loaded round's total manufacturing cost. So every time a shooter ejects and walks away from a large caliber cartridge case it's like throwing away six or eight cents. For economy as well as fun, more and more shooters are turning to reloading. You can tell a reloader; he'll be the one picking up and pocketing all his empties!

The fun starts when you undertake your first reloading session, but, frankly, how soon the economy of reloading enters into the picture depends on how much shooting you do. This must balance in relation to the necessary investment in reloading tools and ammo components.

Eventually, if one does enough of it, reloading pays off, whether one shoots rifle, shotgun, pistol, or all three.

The reloading hobby was going strong when the Gun Control Act of 1968 came along and dealt it a hard blow. The Act didn't make home reloading of ammunition illegal, but the required red tape connected with acquisition and possession of powders and primers has tended to discourage some shooters from continuing or taking up the hobby.

The average reloader keeps very little powder on hand, yet must comply with numerous national, state and local regulations. Sometimes these laws and their accompanying administrative regulations take absurd form, and result in much inconvenience and injustice to sportsmen-reloaders before they are rescinded or modified.

For example, a few years ago the State of Flor-



New Williams hunting scope sight, shown with high "tunnel view" mount that permits optional use of metallic sights.

ida decreed that powder purchased for reloading be stored in "an approved powder magazine." For a time, such storage was made a condition of retail sale of rifle and pistol powders.

Now a "powder magazine," in Underwriter terms, is quite an elaborate and costly affair! It is also unnecessary from the standpoint of safety, at least with modern smokeless powders and/or the small quantities of volatile black powder the average sporting goods store and home reloader normally keep on hand.

When shooters and reloading equipment retailers pointed out these truths to Tallahassee, the red tape was quickly unwound and discarded. Today, purchasing reloading components in Florida is no more restrictive to the responsible sportsman than is his purchase of a new firearm in accordance with the provisions of the Gun Control Act of 1968.

Even so, many shooters who should be reloading costly brass cases now being discarded hesitate to get into the reloading game. Most say they don't want to make the mistake of investing in expensive reloading equipment when their active interest may be only temporary.

For these, I recommend purchase of a popular, simple, and inexpensive reloading kit known as the Lee Loader, manufactured by Lee Custom Engineering, Inc., Hartford, Wisconsin 53027. It is available for almost any popular rifle or pistol caliber or shotgun gauge. The investment will be only \$10, plus the cost of components, of course.

Despite its simplicity, the Lee Loader does a good job for the shooter who has only two or three boxes of empty cases to reload at a time and has a little time on his hands. For the average user, the tool will turn out a completely reload shell or cartridge per minute.

The kit consists of a few dies and a soft mallet for resizing and bullet seating. A powder charge cup takes care of accurate powder measurement. In essence, the Lee Loader duplicates, in simple form, the basic reloading steps of volume production reloading tools. Any shooter who first uses a Lee Loader will get a pretty good idea of what reloading is all about.

Reloading is fun, practical, and, in the long run, economical. Furthermore, reloaded ammunition is often more accurate than commercial loads. Too, a small outfit like the Lee Loader can be carried in the pocket into field or camp for reloading ammunition as it is used.

That's the closest anybody can come to defying that old adage that says you can't have your cake and eat it, too.

AS MILITARY WEAPONS go, most of the Swiss-produced shoulder arms have had good mechanical design and careful manufacture, which has resulted in accuracy and dependability afield.

Evidently, the Swiss, long a nation of riflemen, know that only practical, rugged military rifles are of value to an army for national defense.

One such firearm is the now-obsolete Swiss Model 1911 bolt-action rifle, known otherwise as the Schmidt Rubin. It was one of finest military weapons of its day, and for a bolt-action could be fired at a very rapid rate. It has long had a reputation for fine accuracy.

Many thousands of these Swiss rifles have been declared surplus and released to commercial outlets. American sportsmen, attracted by the advertisements of various dealers, have lost little time buying up the best ones among the imports.

The Swiss Model 1911 military rifle features a straight-pull bolt and a detachable, six-round box magazine, four-groove, right-hand twist rifling in the long barrel of the standard model and in the shorter (23-inch) barrel of the carbine version, and it has a blade front sight and an open rear sight, adjustable for elevation. The caliber is 7.5mm x 55, more succinctly called 7.5mm.

In the case of the Model 1911, the caliber is "the catch." The Swiss are no longer officially using the 7.5mm x 55, and existing stocks of ammunition have dwindled. In some sections of the United States, as in some foreign countries, 7.5mm ammo has become extremely scarce—practically nonexistent!

But now, owners of the Swiss Model 1911 can take heart. Ammunition—sporting ammunition—of the highest grade is available. Norma Precision, Inc., South Lansing, New York, American importers of Norma brand ammunition, recently received a large shipment of 7.5mm sporting ammunition from Norma's big factory in Sweden. These factory loads use a 180-grain, soft-point, semipointed, boat-tail bullet. They're packed twenty rounds to the box.

Your local sporting goods dealer can get these 7.5's for you if he hasn't already stocked them.

More good news: For 7.5mm owners who prefer to load their own, Norma can furnish unprimed cases made to high dimensional stability standards. Repeated reloading can be done with long case life.

When loaded with 52.2 grains of Norma No. 204 powder, finished loads will duplicate factory ballistics—muzzle velocity of 2,650 feet per second.

The Swiss Model 1911 rifle is still available as war surplus from any number of firms advertising in *The Shotgun News*, Columbus, Nebraska 68601, and plenty of good ones can still be found among them.

Century Arms, Inc., St. Albans, Vermont 05478, advertises the standard model in "NRA Very Good to Excellent" condition for \$21 and the preferred carbine model in "NRA Good" grade only for \$23. Shipment, of course, must be made to a Federally licensed dealer on your behalf—usually no problem to arrange for a fair fee.

These rifles can easily be improved for sporting use by the substitution of various sights and other accessories made especially for the model by Williams Gun Sight Company, Davison, Michigan 48423.

You can fit this rifle with a dandy receiver peep sight, like the Williams FP-SW, but scope sights are not recommended for it. The Swiss Model 1911 is just not one of those military rifles that lends itself to easy scope mounting. And, since it was not made for chamber pressures exceeding normal 45,000 p.s.i., conversion to a larger cartridge is not recommended, which is really unnecessary since ammunition in the 7.5mm is now available.

All this means that many thousands of already privately-owned, and long idle, Model 1911's can be activated as hunting or target rifles.

In the same way that many Schmidt Rubins have been standing in the rack awaiting suitable ammunition, so have many old Winchesters, Marlins, and Sharps—long discontinued models and chambered for ammunition no longer available commercially.

To help the reloader, SG International, P.O. Box 702, Hermosa Beach, California 90254, manufactures virgin brass, unprimed cases, ready to load if you have the required size dies. (If you haven't, Fred Huntington of RCBS, Oroville, California 95965, can make a set of reloading dies for you and advise on the proper powder charges for each particular rifle caliber.)

Available for reloading are new, unprimed cases for such calibers as .33 WCF, .35 WCF, .40 WCF, .38/72 WCF, .40/82 WCF, .45/90 WCF, .45/85, .38/56, and .45/110 Sharps straights. These all-new cases will withstand many, many reloadings.

If that fine old Winchester, Marlin, or Sharps rifle will pass a gunsmith's safety check, it can be made useful again—as well as ornamental. ●

Fish Management Notes

FORMER COMMISSION director A. D. "Bob" Aldrich of Ridge Manor, who retired from his position as state superintendent of fish hatcheries last April, has been named an honorary life member of the American Fisheries Society.

The action was taken at the Society's centennial meeting, held September 13-18 in New York City, where the professional fish conservationists' group was organized December 20, 1870.

Aldrich began his career with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries in 1921. He has been an active member of the AFS since 1930. He was director of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission from 1955 to 1965.

Dr. O. E. Frye, Jr., director, and Assistant Chief of Fisheries F. G. Banks, both of Tallahassee, represented the Commission at the AFS meeting, held in conjunction with the 60th annual meeting of the International Association of Game, Fish & Conservation Commissioners, of which Aldrich is a past president, and the 24th annual meeting of the Natural Resources Council of America.

AIRCRAFT AID Commission personnel in the performance of various duties—in enforcement patrol; in counting ducks, deer, and even alligators; in search and rescue operations; in water pollution detection; in aerial photography; even for collection of water samples and rushing them to the laboratory for analysis.

But the latest innovation is the use of a helicopter for on-site inspection of chemical spraying operations—with an eye toward environmental protection not only for fish and wildlife but for people, too.

Aided by Commission 'copter pilot Terry Gough of Lake Worth, Dr. Cobia Goforth of West Palm Beach, regional fishery biologist for the Everglades Region, is able to drop in—literally—on spraying operations to check the chemical pesticides or herbicides being used for legality under Florida's new law restricting use of certain types.

During a recent unannounced inspection, a highly toxic terrestrial, or land, plant herbicide was being applied in canal waters. Goforth discovered the chemical container bore an "experimental" label. A quick check with the Florida Department of Agriculture revealed, sure enough, that the chemical was neither registered, as required by law, nor had the manufacturer applied for a product label!

Under the new restrictions, which became effective January 1, 1970, this compound should not have been sold to the general public.

Products on the restricted list include DDT, dieldrin, aldrin, endrin, heptachlor and others.

Dealers must be licensed to sell these pesticides; buyers must have permits from the Department of Agriculture to use them; manufacturers must comply with strict labeling and other laws, both federal and state, before they can market their products legally.

At last report, the Department of Agriculture was investigating the case further.

THE INFAMOUS walking catfish from Asia (*Clarias batrachus*), which was discovered in Palm Beach County in 1967 and had become a breeding species by the following year, was discovered in Hillsborough County waters in September.

According to Regional Fishery Biologist Jon Buntz of Lakeland, the presence of the exotic fish in the Gibsonton-Riverview area south of Tampa was confirmed by fish population samples taken after a single specimen was taken from an irrigation canal there.

Buntz said the walking catfish has apparently extended its range northward in Florida and spawned successfully.

Non-native fish specialist Vernon Ogilvie of West Palm Beach, who will head an exotic fish research facility being built at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, confirmed that a number of potentially harmful exotic species were taken in the Hillsborough samples along with the air-breathing catfish. All are considered potential competitors of native species of fresh water fish.

The walking catfish grows to approximately 20 inches maximum length and can wriggle over dry land for considerable distances.

Like native catfishes, the walking variety is most active at night. Mass movements have been observed in Palm Beach and Broward counties as the hikers sought new homes and feeding waters.

A permit is required to possess a live walking catfish in Florida.

PLANS ARE COMPLETE for construction of a new sport fishing lake in the Blackwater River State Forest in northwest Florida, according to John W. Woods, chief of Fisheries Division, Tallahassee.

The lake will be located in Okaloosa County—about 25 miles northwest of Crestview on Hurricane Creek. It will cover approximately 493 acres, which will make it the largest of three fish management area lakes built by the Commission in the Blackwater Forest in cooperation with the Division of Forestry, Florida Department of Agriculture. (Bear Lake in Santa Rosa County covers 107 acres; Karick Lake in Okaloosa, 75 acres.)

Commission Chairman William M. Blake of Tampa said, "This new lake is being built with funds which resulted from passage of the uniform fresh water fishing license bill by the 1970 Legislature." ●

For that BIG ONE



that didn't get away

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIES

LARGEMOUTH BASS

.....8 pounds or larger

CHAIN PICKEREL

.....4 pounds or larger

BLUEGILL (BREAM)

.....1 1/2 pounds or larger

SHELLCRACKER

.....2 pounds or larger

BLACK CRAPPIE

.....2 pounds or larger

RED BREAST

.....1 pound or larger

All fish must be taken from the fresh waters of the state of Florida, as defined by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Fish must be caught on conventional fishing tackle, with artificial or live bait, in the presence of at least one witness.

The catch must be weighed and recorded at a fishing camp or tackle store within the state by the owner, manager, or an authorized agent of the respective establishment.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S FISHING CITATION

is available without charge, to any and all subscribers to Florida Wildlife Magazine, and their immediate families, who catch any of the fresh-water game fish of the prescribed species and size requirements. Citation, showing recorded date of the catch, will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of the following application form that has been properly filled out and signed.

Only fishing citation applications received within 90 days from date of catch will be honored.

APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION

The Editor, FLORIDA WILDLIFE

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Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla.

Please send me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation with the inscribed data listed below:

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City _____ State _____ Zip No. _____

Species _____ Weight _____ Length _____

Type of Tackle _____

Bait or Lure Used _____

Where Caught _____ in _____ County

Date Caught _____ Catch Witnessed By _____

Registered, Weighed By _____ At _____

Signature of Applicant _____

CUT OUT AND SAVE THIS APPLICATION BLANK



Labrador Retriever (with Mallard hen)

Photo By Wallace Hughes

6-1-70 10 4-71
 JOSEPH P. BARNDY
 512 E. LOWELL ST
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 Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission
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